

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 2, line 19 with the following amended paragraph:

To screen for loss of foot sensation among diabetics, a clinician tests a minimum of five plantar sites (see A, B, C, D, E in FIG. 1) on each foot of a patient by pressing a testing implement against each site until the testing device buckles, all-the-while monitoring whether the patient can detect the force created by the testing implement against his/her feet. A ~~patient=s~~ patient's inability to detect sensation will signal to the tester that the patient is at high risk for plantar ulceration.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 6, line 16 with the following amended paragraph:

The present invention describes an automated process for producing medical test elements such as the LEAP Testing Implement described above with respect to FIGS. 1-3. Such elements are sometimes referred to in the art either as ~~Aesthesimeters@ or Aesthesimeters.@~~ Aesthesimeters© or Aesthesimeters©.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 7, line 16 with the following amended paragraph:

Such stations/components may include one or more tension control bars or rollers 20, which is/are generally provided on the machine 100 to maintain appropriate tension upon the material 10 after it is unwound from the spindle 12. This roller 20 can be a so-called ~~Adancer@~~ Adancer© roll that maintains tension upon the material 10 by moving up and down at appropriate time intervals as is generally known in the art. Optionally, the machine 100 can also include drive and idle rolls (not shown) that maintain further control of the material 10 as is generally known in the art.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 8, line 10 with the following amended paragraph:

Once scored, these portions 60A, 60B are caused to be folded toward each other as they pass through a folding station 70 (see FIG. 6) of the machine. The folding station 70 generally includes two wheels 72, 74 that are positioned such that as the handle-forming material 10 is fed between the wheels, the material 10 is caused to be folded lengthwise such that the ends ~~62, 64~~ 62, 66 of the portions 60A, 60B of the material 10 converge toward each other as shown in FIG. 8.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 9, line 6 with the following amended paragraph:

Because of the geometry of the handle-forming material 10 and the design and location of the ~~machine's~~ machine's components, it is understood that the handle-forming material, once loaded onto the spindle 12, may initially be required to be guided to the separator device 80 by hand or by other suitable automated or non-automated means. In such an embodiment, the material 10 is guided from the spindle 12, under any tension control rollers 20 and then to the perforating wheel 28 of the first scoring station.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 10, line 5 with the following amended paragraph:

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the test element material has a diameter in the range of about 0.4 millimeter to 0.5 millimeter. For a test element material having a diameter within this range, the heating temperature should be in the range of about ~~250°F to 350°F~~ 250°F to 350°F, and the heating time should be in the range of about 20 seconds to 40 seconds.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 10, line 18 with the following amended paragraph:

In another alternate embodiment, an application component (not shown) of the placement station 90 ~~100~~ then applies a sufficiently strong adhesive, e.g., a pull-and-stick adhesive, to the test element material 34 and/or one or both portions 60A, 60B of the handle-forming material 10. Thereafter, a heat-seal press or plate component (not shown) of the placement station 90 presses and heats the first and second portions 60A, 60B of the handle element material 10 together to securely enclose (via the activated thermosensitive adhesive already present on the handle element material) the test element material 34 between these first and second portions of the handle element material while maintaining the above-described right angle relationship.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 11, line 21 with the following amended paragraph:

It is further understood that although the test element portion 2 of the LEAP Testing Implement is shown in FIG. 2 as protruding from the handle element portion 4 of the LEAP Testing Implement such that the shape of the LEAP Testing Implement resembles a flag, the test element portion 2 may protrude from the handle element portion 4 to form other Testing Implement shapes, as long as the angle of protrusion, α , is approximately a right angle and the distance of protrusion is between 37 millimeters and 39 millimeters. Exemplary, non-limiting, alternative protrusion positions of the test element portion 2 from the handle element portion 4 are shown by the dashed ~~lines 2', 2" in~~ lines 2', 2" in FIG. 2.